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# Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining Qualified Faculty at Community Colleges in Sierra Leone

Gloria Betts  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Gloria Betts

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2017

Abstract

Attracting, Recruiting, and Retaining Qualified Faculty  
at Community Colleges in Sierra Leone

by

Gloria Betts

MBA, The George Washington University, 1996

BS, St. Augustine's College, 1988

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Public Policy

Walden University

June 2017

## Abstract

This case study was designed to explore policies that were in place to attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty for 4 community colleges in Sierra Leone. The research was necessitated by the apparent inability of Sierra Leone educators to train and retain faculty possessing the required academic credentials. The research questions were designed to address the policies and strategies used to attract and recruit faculty, better prepare faculty, improve the quality of classroom instruction, and retain qualified faculty at community colleges. The literature review yielded results about the benefits of community colleges in developing countries, thus reinforcing the need for qualified faculty. Case study methodology and open-ended interviews with 12 purposely selected participants were used to ensure trustworthiness and reveal the essential characteristics of how community colleges in Sierra Leone may succeed in faculty attraction, recruitment, and retention. Participants reported that word of mouth solicitation was the primary method for faculty recruitment, and that the top challenge faced by these institutions was fiscal constraints. Although findings from this study are specific to 4 institutions, they may serve as a guide for qualified faculty retention at all community colleges in Sierra Leone, and hopefully bring about social change by improving academic excellence throughout the country.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wonderful husband Mr. Eben Tuboku-Metzger, my nieces Alexis Crown and Jamilah Kebbay, my mother Rev. K.G.A. Betts-Cole, step-father Mr. Arnold Cole, my sister Dr. Noahleen Betts-Kebbay, brother-in-law Mr. Umaru Kebbay, my sister Ms. Nora Kalokoh, my son Mr. Lavell Brown, my daughter Ms. Jenell Brown, my uncle Mr. J.E. Laverse, my aunts Mrs. Millicent Davies, Mrs. Effuah Davies and all the participants who made this study possible.

In memory of my father Mr. Noah Adeoti Betts and sister Mrs. Irene Wheeler.  
Aunty Win & Uncle Jack Amy who took care of me during my early years in Brighton, England.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning (Proverbs 3:13; 9:9).

I thank God for being with me every step of the way.

## Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express deepest and sincere gratitude to my committee chair Dr. Anthony Leisner and committee members Dr. Mary Brown and Dr. George Kieh for their unwavering guidance, encouragement and expertise throughout my doctoral journey. Their willingness to provide timely, encouraging and critical feedback was really appreciated. Without their support I would not have written such a successful dissertation.

A very special thank you to family, friends and colleagues for their utmost support, advice and assistance throughout this process: Drs. Marilyn Hamilton, Gail Kettlewell, Madiana Odumosu, Walter McCollum, Betty & Udoh Udum.

Yes, it takes a village and the village includes:

Gemina & Samuel Archer-Davies, Ayo Mseka, Breh & Annette Koroma, Martha Johnson, William Hacker, Amoni & Kofi Agbenoo, June Benjamin, Major Christian & Mrs. Bariatu Smith, Joya Tucker, Janice Gooding, Eva Carew, Elizabeth & Matthew Coleridge-Taylor, Kara Dunston, Dr. Jumoke Koso-Thomas, Dr. Bob & Mrs. Linda Maddox, Clifford Roberts, Jessie, Sheryl & Kenneth Stuckey, Marie-Angele (Mimi) Betts, Revs. Charles Hoyt and James Davies, Kofi & Jacintha Ofori, Karen Artis, Dr. Bob & Mrs. Ilara Thomas, Kathy Y. Mosley, Caroline Oyuyo, Melinda Jennings, Emma Fofanah, Sully Hamid (Passadie), Leon & Gloria Jacobs, Ernest Macrae, Marion Fornah, Saidu Jabbie, Henry & Hazel Matthews, Mariatou Allie-Dumbuya, Saminatu Tejansie, Scott King, Alfreda Ellis, Sonnie Abebaku, Richard Mbakop, David Garnett, Janis Simmons, Shantae' Jones, Erick Myrick, Francess Macauley, Martéal Higginbotham,

Desmond Walcott-Taylor, Martin & Patricia Bradshaw, Claudia Darlan, Marilyn Myers,  
Paula Ward, The Betts & Metcalf Cole families, Prof. David Koroma, Mr. Josephus  
Sawyer & Ibrahim Fofanah (Tertiary Education Commission Staff).



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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Background**

Education has always, and will continue to play, an important role in the progress or advancement of a country or region. A nation may not reach its full potential if it lacks a quality and diversified educational system. It is widely accepted that higher education plays an important role in enhancing economic and social improvement (Oketch, McCowan, & Schendel, 2014), which allows for poverty reduction and country sustainability by improving safety and peace. Cheek, Santos and Vaillant (2015) have noted that there is a relationship between education and economic growth as a result of a variety of factors including economic policies, political and social structures, and distribution of education. Wilson and Baack (2012) stated that more advanced countries publicized the education levels of their workforce, while developing countries advertised low labor rates and natural resources.

Economists have affirmed that the economic state of a country helps define present and future trends in the occupational sectors, which, in turn, could influence the type of programs offered in the educational sector. Economic growth depends on many facets of the developing country's economy, but human capital and infrastructure are particularly significant to economic growth (Sawalha, Mazouz & Pellet, 2013). A diversified educational system can equip persons to successfully enter the labor market. Educational diversification can effectively address the needs of the labor market since it enables essential partners and policymakers to react to shifts in the economy and make educational changes accordingly. Sustained economic growth requires substantial and

continuous investment in human capital, with the major form being investment in education (Cheek, Santos and Vaillant, 2015).

If quality and current education standards are needed for a country to participate effectively on a global level, community colleges in developed countries have proven successful as a channel for providing higher education. Research conducted by the World Bank (2007) buttresses the point that the higher education landscape is changing, and community colleges are among the channels creating new opportunities to meet the growing social demand. Furthermore, the World Bank research indicated that it is important to have a component that links secondary education to tertiary education that provides remedial courses when necessary, such as those offered in community colleges and bridge courses on fundamental subjects, mainly in mathematics and science.

In addition, access to quality and affordable higher education is needed to bring developing countries to the level where they can compete on the global stage and continue to do so. Educating low-income individuals is a key factor in the growth and progress of countries in the developing world that account for about 80% of the world's population (Mellow & Katopes, 2009).

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to lag behind the rest of the world in education. Specifically, less than 25% of qualified high school graduates in this region will achieve university-level education. This is partially due to the lack of higher education institutions in this region; most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have fewer than three universities (Wilkerson et al., 2011). In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where more than

half of the world's poorest countries can be found, the participation numbers in higher education have not grown since 2000 (Bluntzer, 2008).

Kofi Annan, the seventh secretary general of the United Nations, noted that literacy education is central to the social and economic development of a country. It is the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential (Annan, 1997).

Bluntzer (2008) found that non-industrialized countries are still faced with challenges that hinder or prevent them from having a successful higher education system. The United Nations, The World Bank, governments, and private corporations have attempted but seen limited positive results in terms of faculty recruitment and retention in higher education initiatives in developing countries.

Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital city was home to the first institution of higher learning in sub-Saharan Africa in general, and West Africa specifically. The University of Sierra Leone (formerly The Fourah Bay College) was founded on February 18, 1827, and has matriculated some of the best and brightest students in West Africa. Freetown was at one time nicknamed the Athens of Africa because of its university and high standard of education (Paracka, 2002; UNICEF, 2014).

The promise of a quality higher education became stagnant even before the 11-year civil war (1991-2002). The devastating civil war took the nation's education system as an early casualty (Ozisik, 2015). After the war, few if any higher education options were available for students, especially for those who lacked economic resources or the intellectual aptitude. The options, then and currently, have been to attend a teacher's



training college or a technical/vocational institution, or to join the workforce. These alternatives are sure to pose challenges for someone with limited educational qualifications.

Sierra Leone's current policy on education is to provide quality, relevant, and equitable learning opportunities for all (Alghali, Turay, Thompson & Kandeh, 2005). The following documents comprise the policy and legal framework for education in Sierra Leone:

- Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991.
- New Education Policy, 1995.
- National Education Master Plan, 1997–2006.
- Education for All National Action Plan, 2004.
- Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2004.
- Education Act, 2004.
- Universities Act, 2004.

Kanu and Kettlewell (2009) have long been proponents of community colleges in Sierra Leone, and have designed the International Community College Town Center System, a new educational model for developing countries. This new system is designed to build global competitiveness via talent development, workforce development, and economic development. This system should result in adults and youth receiving associate degrees and certificates, employment, and self-sufficiency. In addition to the college is a business park to serve the community and hire students (Kanu & Kettlewell, 2009). This

would be a successful model if community colleges can attract and retain qualified faculty.

In addition to providing the problem statement and an overview of the study, in this chapter I discuss the purpose of the study, the study's significance, the research questions, and the conceptual framework. I also outline the nature of the study as it relates to methodology, definition of terms, assumptions, and limitations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

African countries are affected differently by migration. As indicated by Ratha et al. (2011), migration rates tend to be particularly high in countries that have suffered conflicts. As a result of the West African "brain drain," Sierra Leone community colleges were challenged with recruiting and retaining qualified faculty. The education act of 2004 identified the problems, but did not identify strategic policies to be implemented as a solution to these challenges. The contributing factors to this challenge still include the lack of available prospective faculty with the necessary credentials in training and education. Faculty members who lack the proper credentials certainly will be under-equipped to teach their assigned courses. This can also occur if faculties have not kept up with advances in their respective content area. These shortcomings can contribute to low student academic achievement, thus producing ill-equipped graduates.

A second factor is the perceptions qualified faculty members have of community colleges, as related to comparatively low remuneration and more lucrative employment in other sectors (Sierra Leone Gazette, 2004). Faculty salaries have failed to keep pace with other industries, making it hard to attract and retain talented faculty. Since globalization

has simplified migration across borders, academics are free to move away from countries with relatively low salaries and poor working conditions to those with greater resources (Hayward & Ncayiyana, 2014).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The Sierra Leone Education Act 2004 highlighted the loss of human capital as a result of the “brain drain” caused by Sierra Leoneans seeking education and employment out of the country or not attending a tertiary institution. The path to matriculate into college only assists those who can achieve higher education status; however, for those who cannot achieve this, options are limited to either teaching or attending vocational/technical institutes. For most high school graduates, higher education is a viable conduit to economic and social achievement (Wang, 2012).

Today, U.S. community colleges have policies and strategic plans geared towards strengthening the economy and citizenry (Kelsay & Zamani-Gallaher, 2014). As such, researchers have presented the U.S. community college system as an affordable educational alternative that can be used as a model in Sierra Leone to strengthen its scholastic groundwork. In this study, I investigated what policies and strategies community colleges can use to attract and retain qualified faculty. I also explored what faculty credentials should be in Sierra Leone to create a “brain gain.” For practical reasons, I focused on the capital city Freetown, which houses most of the student body, educators, and policy makers.

### **Research Questions**

Qualitative research has historical roots in the sociological inquiry of human groups, processes, and phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Community colleges have worked well around the world. In this study, I attempted to explore what policies and strategies can attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty in Sierra Leone. I developed the following Research questions to guide this study:

1. What policies did community colleges use to recruit qualified faculty?
  - a. Of the processes identified in Question 1, which three criteria were recognized as the most effective?
2. After hiring a faculty member, what policies were in place to retain that faculty person?
  - a. Of the policies identified in Question 2, which were the most effective?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The first step in a qualitative research study is building the conceptual framework. A conceptual framework provides a context for understanding of what is to be studied (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). When developing the conceptual framework, I drew on elements from two career development theories: those of Super (1980, 1990) and Holland (1997).

There are two general types of career development theories: those that focus on individuality and occupational tasks, and those that pertain to human development throughout a person's life. In his self-concept theory of career development, Super (1990) stated that self-concept results from a combination of varying factors such as

physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation. The underlying premise of Holland's popular theory of career development is that personality is instrumental in our career choices. Additionally, the theory integrates constructs from personality psychology, vocational behavior, and social psychology. Holland's theory has been applied in career development contexts by grouping individuals under two or three personality types, and then matching these individuals with potential careers. The premise of this theory is that the higher the degree of similarity between individual and occupational characteristics, the greater the potential for good career-related outcomes including satisfaction, persistence, and achievement (Holland, 1997).

### **Operational Definitions**

The following are definitions of terms I have used throughout this project:

*Andragogy*: A theory of adult learning that implies adults learn differently and prefer to learn by explicit methods of instruction.

*Colonial Era*: Timeframe in which Sierra Leone was under colonial rule that lasted from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Community college*: An institution of higher education accredited to award an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science degree as its highest degree.

*Cross-border education*: The movement of people, knowledge, programs, providers, and curriculum across national or regional jurisdictional borders.

*Developing country*: A country that is not highly industrialized. A developing country is categorized as such based on the Human Development Index (HDI). This

classification scheme measures life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, and standard of living. The HDI ranks the countries of the world into three categories: developed, developing, or undeveloped (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2013).

*Literacy rate:* Literacy rate refers to a person's ability to read and write at a specific age. Low levels of literacy can impede a country's economic growth (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 2014).

*Tertiary education:* Tertiary education generally refers to all post-secondary education. Universities are a key part of all higher education systems, “the diverse and growing set of public and private tertiary institutions in every country—colleges, technical training institutes, community colleges, nursing schools, research laboratories, centers of excellence, distance learning centers, and many more—form a network of institutions that support the production of the higher-order capacity necessary for development” (The World Bank Group, 2013).

### **Assumptions**

In this study, I worked from the following assumptions:

- The faculty attraction, recruitment, and retention processes had the potential to impact the quality of education.
- Faculty's educational credentials and work experience were reliable factors in determining the effectiveness in the classroom.
- There was a standard hiring process in place.
- Study participants responded honestly.
- The case study design was a suitable methodology for data collection.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

I limited the scope of this study to community colleges in the capital city of Freetown, Sierra Leone. My goal was to determine whether or not the recruitment policies currently in place were sufficient to effectively attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty for the community colleges. The principle delimitations for this study were:

- The study was geographically limited to the capital city of Freetown, Sierra Leone.
- In this study, I only examined the views of current faculty and administrators in higher education; that of prospective faculty were not considered.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As I thoroughly explored the research topic, I maintained an awareness of the following limitations:

- For practical reasons, the research was limited to the capital city of Freetown, and the findings may not apply to the entire country.
- It is not impossible that a researcher may be faced with issues regarding the reliability of data when conducting research in Sierra Leone. In spite of the global growth in technology, Sierra Leone is, unfortunately, not reliable and is not fully equipped with electronic or automated options to store or save data; therefore, it has limited data available. Moreover, due to lack of funds, resources, and knowledge, or the combination of these factors, most of the

data needed for comparative or statistical analysis were lost or destroyed during the civil war.

- Because of a lack of sound empirically-based studies, I have included several references published beyond the standard 5-year threshold.

Nevertheless, the data I acquired for this study provides an understanding of what is needed to successfully attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty for the community colleges in Freetown. Furthermore, having this knowledge could be useful to the administrators who are tasked with the hiring process. Students will succeed, and the community colleges, students, and communities will benefit from that success.

### **Implications for Social Change**

One of my key goals in this study was to bring about social change. In the preceding paragraphs, I have provided the background and foundation to mark the significance of this research study. The current higher education framework in Sierra Leone continues to broaden the gap due to the lack of an intermediary model to accommodate those who do not qualify to attend a university and do not want to attend a technical/vocational program or a teachers' college.

Because of the lack of a transitional model, it is necessary to put in place affordable and quality alternatives for the masses to help them obtain appropriate and sustainable skills. Today, expatriates are brought into the country at premium salaries when local staff could be hired at a fraction of the cost. The money saved could be re-invested into the economy. As Hurtado (2008) has noted, "Higher education is the place to foster a critical consciousness and commitment to social change" (p. 277). In this



study, I have outlined social change opportunities for Sierra Leone. Findings from this study can be used to show how community colleges in the country's higher education framework can help retain local talent. The results from this study can also demonstrate how local talent retention can contribute to a more sustainable and economically viable country.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because in it I took a deeper look into the strategies, methods, and policies for identifying, recruiting, and retaining faculty at Sierra Leone's community colleges. This could promote academic growth and foster economic development. Since community colleges are not very popular in Africa, this research and its consequences could possibly benefit other African countries as well.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided the reader with an overview of the research study, and have presented the purpose of the study, situations that led to the study, the research methodology, the research structure, and limitations of the study. In Chapter 2, I discuss the literature relating to the role of community colleges in Sierra Leone and how they can attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty. I also discuss the framework for community colleges and the career development theories the researcher selected. Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the methodology I employed to determine whether community colleges in Sierra Leone can retain qualified faculty. Since the purpose of the study was to examine the policies and strategies for attraction, recruitment, and retention of qualified faculty by

community colleges in Sierra Leone, I offer an overview and assessment of its current tertiary educational structure and discuss community college initiatives in Sierra Leone.

The findings in Chapter 4 serve as the foundation for Chapter 5. In it, I analyze the data I collected to show if a new community college system in Sierra Leone will attract qualified faculty and what qualifications will be required. Capping the chapter are the summarized research results, the conclusions I drew from the research study, and recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

In the current debilitating economic atmosphere that Sierra Leone finds itself, it is important to recognize that qualified lecturers and professors have become a hard sell within the country. At the present Sierra Leone relies on a lot of foreign aid in an effort to develop or move ahead in most sectors, and education is no exception. Development aid has historically been a high proportion of Sierra Leone's gross domestic product, and it surged after the civil conflict. Annual aid disbursed to Sierra Leone between 1970 and 2007 was at an average of 14.2% of GDP, a figure much higher than the regional average of 3.7% for Africa as a whole (Kargbo, 2012).

Even though there has been a decline in education training, it remains the area with the highest enrollment at 34%. According to Guerrero (2014), there is an apparent mismatch in the education sector. Despite the high numbers of teachers produced, many are trained in areas that are in low demand. At the same time, there is a shortage of qualified teachers in areas such as mathematics, the sciences, and languages. Many schools operate without trained and qualified teachers, and those that are currently teaching are neither approved nor paid by the government.

In spite of the limited data on the subject, there is an unfortunate widespread belief that the quality of higher education in Sierra Leone is on the decline (The World Bank, 2013). This perception is held by a wide range of stakeholders including students, higher education officials, employers, and even political leaders. An approach used to measure the quality of education was to look at the percentage of academic staff with

doctoral degrees. The available data shows that 34% of lecturers at the University of Sierra Leone and 20% at Njala, also, in Sierra Leone have a doctoral degree (The World Bank, 2013). No doubt, this is substandard when compared to other flagship public universities across Africa. For instance, 52% of academic staff members have doctoral degrees at Makerere University, 45% have doctoral degrees at the University of Mauritius, 51% have doctoral degrees at the University of Botswana, 71% have doctoral degrees at the University of Nairobi, and 30% have doctoral degrees at the University of Ghana (The World Bank, 2013).

Over the past five decades, the higher education landscape has experienced significant changes. The western world has taken the lead in initiating and keeping up with the changes in the higher-education domain; however, this has not been the case in many developing countries, especially countries in Africa. Universities across Africa suffer from and struggle with serious neglect (Mamdani, 2007). In addition, many of the colleges have insufficient funds to develop and run quality programs. The lack of quality faculty and affordable higher education programs leads to poverty and other social challenges.

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, community colleges were poised to be frontrunners in higher education. In the late 1900s, community colleges operated to provide transfer, occupational or remedial/developmental education, in addition to short-term training (Boggs, 2012). In communities that have community colleges, these institutions are held in high esteem. They provide affordable education and job training to the communities they serve, as well as prestige and employment opportunities to the students who will

then obtain better paying careers. Community colleges are key players in today's higher education systems, and are instrumental in responding to community-based needs in countries such as Canada, Liberia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Boggs, 2012).

Sierra Leone now has a robust need for community colleges. A developing country that is still in transition from a decade-long war has a lot of unskilled human capital that could potentially benefit from community colleges. The civil war displaced approximately 2 million people, which was about one-third of the population (CIA, 2010). As the country continues to transition from the decade-long civil war, the economic system needs a skilled and productive labor force to allow it to thrive. Furthermore, Sierra Leone's income is unevenly distributed (Albrecht & Jackson, 2014). Though it has tremendous mineral, agricultural, and fishery resources, its physical and social infrastructure have yet to recover from the civil war. Attracting and retaining qualified faculty may prove constructive, and will help in reducing factors that are impeding its economic development.

For sure, community colleges are in the spotlight now more than ever. Policymakers now realize that community colleges educate 46% of U.S. undergraduates, as well as 58% of students in Israel, 20% in Korea and France, and 26% in Japan. As Raby (2009) has noted, that student enrollment is substantial even in countries where these institutions are new. Researchers have shown that India enrolls 54,519 students in these institutions, Thailand 13,000 (plus another 30,000 in short-term, non-degree programs), and Jordan 20,000 (Raby, 2009).

For many decades, benefactors and policymakers have concentrated on promoting primary and secondary education as the vital link to development and reducing poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. Recently funds have been reallocated for tertiary education as higher education's importance for socio-economic development has come to be understood by policymakers. There is now a consensus that Africa needs many more qualified educators to develop the robust knowledge needed to promote development (Friesenhahn, 2014).

However, efforts to enhance advanced degrees in Africa have been faced with many challenges. Despite increased investments into higher education and the growing number of students, there is still a shortage of faculty members with advanced degrees. This shortage is compounded by demographics: often, less than 40% of all university staff members are under 40 years old (Friesenhahn, 2014).

Throughout Africa, limited budgets pose challenges for colleges to afford an effective and successful learning infrastructure, but developments have been modest in the past few decades. International partnerships have helped to compensate for poor resources, and have been used to build research capacity to increase the number of young African academics with advanced degrees. Despite this, qualified staff continued to leave faculty positions in African institutions in pursuit of more lucrative jobs either in other sectors or overseas. Approximately 10% of every cohort of sub-Saharan Africans with graduate degrees migrate, resulting in a comparatively low number of qualified faculty remaining in most African countries (Friesenhahn, 2014).

### **Literature Search Strategies**

I conducted a comprehensive literature review for this study. I collected information using a variety of tools such as search engines and electronic databases. These were accessed through libraries at Walden University, the World Bank, and The Washington Research Library Consortium. Specifically, databases I accessed were Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), SAGE Full-Text, and ProQuest databases. To expand the search, I used Google Scholar and government websites. My key search terms included various combinations of the following: *higher education in Sierra Leone, higher education in sub-Saharan Africa, qualified faculty in Africa, recruiting qualified faculty, retaining qualified faculty, community colleges in Sierra Leone, and Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa*. Throughout the literature research process, I found little information on policies and strategies specifically related to challenges faced by community colleges in Sierra Leone regarding recruiting, developing, and retaining quality faculty. In sum, information relating to my specific topic was quite limited.

### **The Community College Concept**

A community college as an institution regionally accredited to award the Associate in Arts degree or the Associate in Science degree as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). From the expansion of access to lower-division academic subjects to the integration of training and vocational programs (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), community colleges have long been an innovative force within the postsecondary education industry. By the end of the twentieth century, community colleges had spread throughout the U.S., and one could be found within easy commute of most homes. These institutions have

evolved to include trade or technical programs, as well as some certification programs relating to workforce development. Cohen & Brawer (2008) also indicate that the U.S. model is the most robust of all developed countries. In addition, a majority of community college scholars agree that the U.S. model serves as the cornerstone for other countries that are adopting the community college model (Raby & Valeau, 2009).

Increasingly, there is the desire for the development of local or domestic partnerships between schools and their communities. Characteristically, in tertiary education and training, the requirements are aimed primarily at meeting the learning needs of new entrants preparing for employment, and the needs of established workers looking to change careers or improve their skills. When an industry closes or cannot be developed because of workers' lack of necessary skills, the community suffers the most. The relationship or partnership between a community and its higher education institutions – namely its community colleges—is imperative because it helps to focus the education and training efforts on what programs are needed to support the businesses that the community supports.

### **The Structural Approach**

On a global level, educational accomplishments vary greatly. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013), adult illiteracy rates in developed countries hover near single digits. This could be a reflection of successful educational systems in these countries, which include qualified faculty in addition to the high status of education in the societies. In these countries, it is a given that education is a right and something that is highly prized. It is true as well that highly



developed countries have the economic means to ensure that all children have the opportunity to achieve their potential in a quality education system. In most developed countries, attendance in school is mandatory through at least the mid-teen years. The compelling desire is that all young people will complete high school, and that many will continue their studies in either an institution of higher learning or in a quality vocational institution.

### **Today's Community College**

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2015), the mission of the community college system is to provide education to individuals in its service region. Typically, community colleges have mission statements that communicate commitments to the regions they serve by having an open enrollment admission policy, a comprehensive educational program, and a commitment to teaching and lifelong learning. Over the years, almost half of all undergraduate students in the United States have attended a community college and have transferred to 4-year institutions (AACC, 2015). Additionally, community colleges provide workforce development, skills training, and noncredit opportunities for students (AACC, 2015). Their services range from offering specific degree programs to providing certification programs.

### **Education in Developing Countries**

In a recent study, Kelly (2014) concluded that there is a high mismatch between higher education and the job market outside academia. Kelly further indicated that African colleges traditionally prepare students for public sector jobs, inadvertently

neglecting the needs of the private sector. Kelly's findings support the need for retaining qualified faculty at community colleges in Sierra Leone in order to offer reorientation to careers in the private sector, which may offer benefits such as better employment prospects and the need for higher salaries?

There is no doubt that qualified academic staff recruitment and retention continues to be a global challenge. However, this situation appears to be most crucial in many African countries. Leaders of African universities recognize the disturbing effect qualified staff shortages have on the goals of institutions of higher education (Tettey, 2010). Tettey (2010) cautioned that if not addressed soon, Africa is at risk of losing its ability to educate adequate personnel to support the countries' human resource needs as well as to sustain and protect the quality of intellectual life in Africa.

This being the case, expanding access to tertiary education in Africa poses a couple of serious problems - they are including the pressures of matriculation growth, and the capacity of universities to provide quality education, especially as it has not been met by an adequate expansion in academic staff. These issues are causes for concern because the ability of existing or new institutions to accept the growing numbers of students depends to a large degree on an adequate pool of instructors (Tettey, 2010).

Kofi Annan, former UN secretary general, stated that literacy is a basic human right for everyone. Education in developing nations is vastly different from that of industrialized or developed nations. Even though there is the desire to learn, the economic system and, in many cases, the cultural attitudes within the country do not

emphasize education. In terms of literacy rates in the sub-Saharan region, UNESCO (2010) has provided the following statistics:

- At least 1 in 3 adults cannot read.
- About 176 million adults are not able to read or write.
- About 47 million young people are illiterate.
- About 21 million adolescents are not enrolled in any structured educational program.
- About 32 million primary-school-aged children are not in school.

Not surprisingly, even countries like China value the U.S. community college concept and are just as eager to tap into its work-force-training expertise (McMurtrie, 2008). On many occasions, there is a divide between what is taught in vocational and technical colleges and what skills the job market needs. This is where community colleges can come in and make a difference.

In the case of China though it has a population of about 1.3 billion people it recently became the second largest economy in the world and continues to play a critical role in the global economy. However, it is still a developing country, with over 70 million of its people living below poverty (The World Bank, 2016). Its industrialized ranking reflects just a small portion of its entire population. As a result, the Chinese Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the China Education Association for International Exchange, a nongovernmental organization, worked on recruiting 500 senior administrators from some of China's 1,100 vocational and technical colleges to a "shadowing program" at community colleges in the United States for five years

(McMurtrie, 2008). Of great importance were curriculum reform, building relationships with industry, and faculty training (McMurtrie, 2008).

Shanghai is the largest city by population in China and in the world. It is one of the four direct-controlled municipalities of China, with a total population of near 24 million by 2013 (Shanghai.gov.cn, 2010). That being said, the city is challenged by the failure of state-owned businesses and the needs of a rapidly aging population. In response to these challenges, the educational sector and government officials created two programs operated out of the same location; a program run jointly by Shanghai Teachers University, and a social workers' union (Ashford, 2013).

During the day, the building serves as a vocational school where teens learn how to make furniture. In the evenings, it transforms into a community college. Here government employees and the unemployed learn how to become social workers. Though rudimentary by American standards, this program is a start in the right direction. A three-month training program is designed to teach students how to care for the elderly and perform basic services for their neighborhoods. For China, the Luwan Community College represents an essential step forward in higher education. There are several visions for this community college, including providing computer courses for senior citizens, a place where the unemployed can be retrained, and entry-level social workers -- including the current crop of graduates -- can continue to study at the university and earn a diploma (Ashford, 2013).

In 2013, India on its part launched a plan and made a commitment to open 200 community colleges over the next few years. One of the reasons for this ambitious plan

is that India is on the verge of a “youth bulge”, with about 600 million people under age 25 who need meaningful employment. On the downside, India is experiencing a shortage of skilled labor (Ashford, 2013).

It became apparent that India admired the success of the U.S. community college model, and it was thus more comfortable in following the same path, since India acknowledges the important relationship between education and industry. As such, this effort will generate a new system of 21st century community colleges, which are expected to enroll around 40 million students (Ashford, 2013). So setting up the colleges within existing colleges and polytechnics and offering credit-based modular courses to facilitate the mobility of learners into the employment market was a wise approach for the decision-makers.

It is important to keep in mind that this model of higher education can only be successful if there is community engagement, business investment and credential stacking. Added to this must be equal access for all. Buttressing this position, former secretary of state Hillary Rodham-Clinton stated community colleges have been effective in the United States and this success can now be seen in India. Community colleges in India were effective in reaching out to lower income students, putting them at the cutting edge of technological change and giving them the skills not only to land jobs but to launch successful careers (Rodham-Clinton, 2011).

In America’s southern neighbor México, the higher education decision-makers had a mission to deliver technological higher education through relevant, comprehensive, and intensive programs of study in order to train higher education technicians and

engineers, who add value to the productive processes and services in the region, and contribute to social development. This gave rise to the technological universities (UT) in the 1990s (Raby & Valeau, 2009).

In the 1990s, Mexico sought help from the U.S. to help improve its higher education system. It did not seek advice from the world's elite institutions such as Yale, Harvard, Stanford or Columbia. Instead, it looked to the community college model to help them develop a similar concept that could help jump-start its economic development efforts (Raby & Valeau, 2009). From this help Mexico built 38 new technical colleges, modeled in part after U.S. community colleges, which offer students degrees in fields such as Information Technology, Environmental Technology and Manufacturing Technology after just three years of study. Though the U.S. model was adopted, Mexico looked at other colleges around the world, including those in Canada, Germany, Japan and France, and adopted components from each one of them.

In the 1990s, Mexico developed a successful approach to promote foreign investment and develop its economy simultaneously. Mexico's UTs were founded in 1991 with the purpose of establishing a public sector of two-year programs in higher education which award students an Associate's degree or Higher Technical University degree (TSU) after the completion of studies (Raby & Valeau, 2009). The government was instrumental in establishing a new type of vocational college – "universidades tecnologicas". These institutions were called upon to introduce in Mexico short-cycle programs of higher education focused on occupationally specific skills for workers seeking entry into the labor market.

These two-year institutions are operated in conjunction with the three branches of government - federal, state, and regional education officials, as well as industry representatives. The curriculum is designed to meet or address local economic needs (Ruiz-Larraguivel, 2011). In the rural region of Chiapas, the syllabus is focused on agriculture and courses are taught in the language of the region's Indian population (Ruiz-Larraguivel, 2011). In the developed northern regions, the technological university students are taught in Spanish, and partnerships have been created with companies such as Volkswagen and Cisco System. All students are required to do an internship (Ruiz-Larraguivel, 2011).

The scholarly contributions of these UTs are that their programs and curricula respond to changing demands of the industrial and production sectors. Emphasis is placed on how these institutions have diversified their educational offerings toward applied technological research as well as vocational career programs, especially for the case of UTs (Ruiz-Larraguivel, 2011). From this collaboration, the Mexican government is confident about the potential of these new institutions. Since Mexico is a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) it became encouraging for more companies to set up facilities in Mexico. Upon completion of the two-year program, graduating students can go directly into the workforce and companies don't have to spend too much time or money in getting them prepared and up to speed on the necessary skills (Ruiz-Larraguivel, 2011).

Currently, developing countries worldwide are faced with a sudden increase of high-school graduates and the university systems are challenged because they are having

difficulty coping with this high number. Despite the lack of infrastructure to accommodate this explosion, there is awareness on the part of these countries that economic growth requires educated and experienced workers to educate the next generation, start and operate successful businesses, operate computerized and technologically advanced machinery and care for newborns, as well as the sick and the elderly.

When the searchlight is turned on Sierra Leone, there is no gain saying that it is very rich in minerals. It boasts the third largest deposit of iron ore in the world and there are huge deposits of bauxite, rutile, gold and diamonds (CIA, 2014; KPMG, 2012). The country possesses the best diamonds for gems and industrial use, and still possesses almost 250 miles of unspoiled or pristine beaches ripe for tourism development. However, sad to say, the companies exploring these opportunities bring in expatriates due to the lack of skilled or trained labor in the country. Successful training programs require money and competent teachers. When it comes to businesses they usually provide on-the-job training programs and don't always see the benefit of supporting college or university academic programs. It is also unfortunate that technical and vocational schools are not always held in high esteem as are colleges and universities.

Consequently, Sierra Leone has experienced an enormous gap in training, and much of the country is still desperately poor (The World Bank, 2012). Expertise is needed to operate medical and other equipment, as well as electronic teaching aids. In the rural and provincial areas, training is needed to operate and implement modern farming techniques, mining of minerals and other trade associated jobs.



It is apparent that the current higher-education system is faced with the challenge of producing graduates who can provide these goods and services. In spite of the limited availability of data, there is a widespread belief that the quality of higher education is on the decline (The World Bank, 2013). This perception is held by an extensive collection of stakeholders including students, higher education officials, employers, and even the political leadership (The World Bank, 2013).

In his study titled “Success Strategies for Adjunct Faculty” Lyons (2004) wrote that administrators should look for faculty who exhibit the following subject criteria: (a) they should possess thorough knowledge and expertise in content; (b) have good people skills and the ability to get along well with a diverse population; (c) should be well-prepared when they enter the classroom; (d) must be critical thinkers; (e) have a positive attitude and a good sense of humor; (f) exude a professional presence; (g) display the ability to work with individual students outside the classroom; (h) project a positive image of the institution; (i) be sure to adhere to college policies and procedures; and (j) will meet deadlines in a timely manner.

In 2010, Steve Bradshaw with The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) presented some very candid observations of higher education challenges in Sierra Leone - “Sierra Leone’s school time blues”. Two areas of concern that were highlighted were the rise of “unqualified and untrained” teachers which adversely affected the education system in the country and resulted in poor educational output. Secondly, the government does play a role in the assessment of tuition and fees;

consequently, the colleges/universities don't have the means to adequately provide equipment, facilities and other resources that would enhance the quality of education.

But if consulted American community colleges are willing to share their knowledge with institutions abroad. Some are inviting faculty members to the United States for training; others are helping establish vocational programs in places like Kenya and Sri Lanka (McMurtrie, 2008). One group, the International Consortium for Educational and Economic Development, brings together technological universities in Mexico and community colleges into the United States and Canada.

These alliances between community colleges, businesses and industry for the training of the work force and the economic advancement of a community are included in the mission of the community college movement. In 2007 the Partnership Development Model was developed by Marilyn Amey, Pamela Eddy and Casey Ozaki as an answer to the growth in joint efforts between tertiary education and the public and private sectors. The authors indicate these partnerships are beneficial to three groups: (a) policymakers (who look at the partnerships as a strategic method of balancing a budget); (b) institutions (who regard the partnerships as resource-sharing opportunities); and (c) students (who see the partnerships as a pathway to post-secondary education) (Amey, Eddy & Ozaki, 2007).

An example of such collaboration was the coupling of business and industry with a community college to offer literacy tutoring. Literacy training is an informal type of training that benefits the community at large, not only the current employer but future employers as well as the society at large. The employer is not the only one who

benefits from literacy training. The benefits extend beyond the employer to the society, molding individuals who are more industrious and flexible to the changes occurring in their environment. But the reasons why young people or adults may lack literacy skills include a fractured public school system, lack of available schooling, civil war and/or undiagnosed learning disabilities. In cases like these, society has the responsibility to be fair and offer a second chance to its youth (Henderson, 2002). Having said this, it is important to note that most developing countries do not have a social welfare structure or are just now creating one.

Because of this lack, strategies and curricula related to economic growth do have a place in the community college model. The curriculum must be geared towards outcomes that provide students with skills to improve their current and future job performance and prospects. This approach ties into the community college mission which is to help people improve job skills and prepare for the job market. The human capital theory in part stipulates that education provides skills that are transferable from one employer to another (Becker, 1975); so one would not expect businesses to pay for training that provides transferrable skills but where the skillset is specialized and unique to an industry, businesses should contribute to the training expenses.

In spite of being independent from England since 1961, Sierra Leone has not adequately developed its educational system (Paracka, 2002) despite the abundance of natural resources and generous foreign aid. Considering Sierra Leone's high illiteracy rate at almost approximately 60% (UNDP, 2016), a shortage of facilities, educators and

inadequate technical training, can a systemic educational structure be designed for Sierra Leone? Can the community college model attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty and build a labor force for today's employment market? Will the community college concept be successful in generating large numbers of graduates to meet Sierra Leone's developmental needs? There is no doubt that something needs to be done to improve the declining socio-economic and educational systems compounded by the unfortunate civil war.

Ninety-eight percent of the Community Colleges for International Development sampled, and 97% of the Liberians interviewed agree that the U.S. model of the community/technical college system is definitely appropriate for Liberia, a neighboring country to Sierra Leone. Respondents note that when properly customized to fit Liberia's developmental and reconstruction needs, the two-year concept will offer Liberian youth a decent future, instill a strong sense of values and work ethics, as well as equip them with a wide range of professional and semi-professional skills to meet the demands of nation-building.

For a community college to withstand its vitality the fundamental framework is as follows:

1. Designed to serve the local community as it relates to education, employment and business needs;
2. Non-standardized test score requirement;
3. Affordable tuition;
4. Awards certificates and degrees;

5. Offers remedial courses;
6. Tends to partner with local businesses and industries to meet their training needs (Elsner, Boggs, & Irwin, 2008);

The flexibility of the curriculums' ability to respond to a community's unique needs is the dominant feature of a community college (Raby, 2009). The curriculum can change in response to changes in the community's economy, social, and technological status as they relate to the needs of the local people. Characteristics shared by various models include: (a) non-compulsory; (b) diversity; (c) defined by local needs; (d) serve a societal void; for example, those ineligible for, or unable to afford university education while also open to the privileged members of the society; (e) increased enrollments especially during times of economic strain or development; (f) lower conferred institutional status in the post-secondary system; and (g) chronic underfunding (Raby, 2009).

Another characteristic of the various models is uniqueness. The local and global shifts resulting from globalization require each model to adapt to the social and economic context of the society in which it is located. The traits of flexibility and uniqueness allow the community college to respond to local needs more rapidly than any other post-secondary institution. Regardless of its unique nature, the community college provides the following: an alternative path for those who cannot enter main-stream universities and for non-traditional students looking for a second chance or trying to build on existing skills (Raby & Valeau, 2009, p. 1).

Globalization has created an interrelated and interdependent reality for national economies. This digital world requires a workforce that is trained and skilled to meet the ever-changing needs of the global economy. Cross-cultural knowledge, technological skills, especially internet competencies, and an attitude that embraces change, are requirements for access to, and success in the competitive knowledge-based economy. Intellectual capital, knowledge acquisition, and global competence are imperative for successful participation in this symbiotic world. Today globalization is a vital concept for students in higher education. There is the need to understand and value the demand in business and industry to hire individuals who can work with diverse nations and cultures; as well as the ability to travel independently internationally to promote their business or industry (Fox & Hundley, 2011).

The perpetual economic shifts caused by globalization place extraordinary pressure on post-secondary education decision makers to adjust the way education is delivered and to whom access is granted (Elsner, Boggs, & Irwin, 2008). Flexibility and uniqueness are strengths of a globally integrated society. Social capital and bridging and bonding with others in mutually successful relationships are crucial to prospering in the global economy. Community college models, which adapt to a country's unique human, intellectual, and social capital needs are necessary to fill the void in post-secondary education and training. Furthermore, Elsner, Boggs, and Irwin (2008) claimed that these needs have inspired or possibly forced a movement in post-secondary education, which offers an alternative to the traditional models of higher education.

Globally, the concept of community college is referred to by many different names. Examples include: junior college, institute of technology, institute of vocational training, polytechnic, regional colleges, technical and further education colleges (TAFEs), and workers' college. Regardless of their appellations, these institutions are distinct from other postsecondary institutions.

What they bring to bear is delivering transformation as a critical cornerstone for the community college models. This concept has been adapted to meet the unique needs of individual countries beginning in the 1950s. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) held the first international meeting to discuss the concept of community colleges in 1971. Over the next two decades, three countries (Suriname, Taiwan, and Thailand) eventually adapted the U.S. model to fit their countries' unique needs. By the 1990s, over 90 countries had developed institutions of higher education that fit the concept of the community college (Raby, 2009).

### **Theories Impacting Community Colleges**

A theory provides an illustrative framework for some observation and from the assumptions of the justification follows a number of probable premises that can be tested to provide support for, or to challenge, the theory. Theories attempt to explain social behavior. As cited in Donaldson, it is important to understand that there are many theories that originate out of our world views. Donaldson also believed that it was impossible to name all the operating theories that exist in community development work, but it is critical for communities to articulate an understanding of how social life is produced (Donaldson, Comfort & Erickson, 2004).

## **The Career Development Theory**

The different explanations of career development incorporate the selection, adjustments and changes of life roles people assume over the course of a lifetime. It is important to remember that individuals trained in career development should be the ones cultivating career advice. It is pertinent to note that the theory of career development is intricately entwined with personal development.

Donald Super and John Holland are well-established contributors to the career development theory, outlining the theory's stages and tasks that shifted the notion of career placement to career development. In practically all modern societies, work is of central importance in the lives of individuals. Work allows them to provide for their families and contribute to the prosperity of their communities.

In essence, career development has come a long way since it was considered a single choice that one made. As the concept was further researched, researchers began to realize that it was more than a choice. Instead, it was an intricate set of influences that began as early as childhood.

### **Donald Super's Self-concept Theory of Career Development**

Donald Super's (1957) theory of career stages uses a life-span approach to describe how individuals make their career choices. His research provided interesting insights into the evolution of theory development and how an individual's life experiences affect his research interests and ideas. Super suggested that even though the process takes time, there are four career stages:



1. *Exploration* - a period of self-examination, education, and the review of different career options;
2. *Establishment* – a period of becoming employed and finding a niche;
3. *Maintenance* - a period of establishing one's position and updating one's skillsets;
4. *Disengagement* - time of transitioning into retirement.

### **John Holland's Theory on Career Choice**

The central tenet of Holland's theory is that people express their personality through their career choices and experiences (Holland, 1985; 1997). His theory rests on the assumption that career choice matches personality. Holland's theory is at the forefront in the study of career development.

The career choice theory is the foundation that allows Holland to develop a personality composition as it relates to the talents, skills and interests individuals seek to actualize. Holland also admits that both favorable and unfavorable environments can allow for the actualization of these characteristics. Holland's (1985, 1997) Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments consists of four primary assumptions which represent "the heart of the theory" (1997, p. 2).

The first assumption is that people can be categorized by their similarity to each of six different personality types which are depicted in a hexagon - RIASEC: Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E), and Conventional (C) (see figure 1).



*Figure 1.* John Holland's hexagon.

These personality types are a result of a combination of biological, cultural, and social influences which lead to different competencies and interests that help shape how people perceive, think, and behave. The second postulation asserts there are six matching work and academic environments which are characterized by a population whose characteristics resemble the six model environments stated earlier: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (Holland, 1985; 1997).

The third assumption is that people seek environments that allow them to exercise their abilities and skills, express their values and attitudes, assume roles and engage in problems befitting their comfort level. The fourth and main assumption states behavior is determined by the interaction of one's environment and personality which can be

understood and predicted by our knowledge of environments and personality types (Holland, 1985; 1997).

*The Self-perception* types are people with investigative interests and prefer occupations in which they can observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate or solve problems. People with artistic interests prefer to work in occupations, in which they can express artistic abilities, or can be innovative or use their intuitions. They prefer to work in unstructured situations using their imagination and creativity. People with social interests like to be with others to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them. People with enterprising interests prefer to work with people through influencing, persuading, performing, leading or managing them for organizational goals or economic gain (Holland, 1985; 1997).

*The Realistic type* perceives himself/herself as someone having mechanical and athletic ability and lacking ability in human relations. People with realistic interests prefer athletic or mechanical occupations and prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants, or animals, or to be outdoors. On the part of *the Investigative type* he/she perceives himself/herself as someone who is scholarly, intellectual, having mathematical and scientific ability, and lacking in leadership ability. *The Artistic type* perceives he/she as expressive, original, intuitive, non-conforming, introspective, independent, disorderly, having artistic and musical ability, and an ability to act, write and speak. And finally *the Social type* perceives himself/herself as someone who likes to help others, understands others, has teaching ability, and lacks mechanical and scientific ability (Holland, 1985; 1997).

In spite of these similarities and dissimilarities of these types, they sought to let individuals exercise their skills and abilities to pursue the appropriate careers. According to Holland, people functioned, developed and found job satisfaction in work environments that were compatible with their personalities (cited in Johnson, 2004, para. 5). This theory explained the everyday questions people asked about their careers and the career decisions they discerned.

A great pity for Sierra Leone is that it has experienced the treacherous side of exclusive social capital through its civil war which contributed to its ailing higher education system. When Sierra Leone gained its independence from England, it lost its funding as well as any ideas that would have contributed to a successful higher education climb. In recent years, third world countries with community colleges have developed a series of bridging international partnerships with the U.S., England, Canada and other industrialized countries that show promise for building social capital that will enhance the institutional effectiveness and productivity of their home countries and community colleges (Clark, 2012). The principles of social capital theory may be useful in this study to highlight the benefits of various domestic and international partnerships.

### **Conclusion**

The above research of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for community colleges researched revealed the following aspects that were of tremendous help for this study:

- The importance of the community college theory or concept;

- The concepts pertaining to the community college – its mission and who it was designed to serve and how;
- The different theories that impacted the community based on the education provided by community colleges - the community development theory – improving the lives of the community that it was designed to serve; career development theories – youth and adult workforce preparation; andragogy – adult learners – who needed a different approach to learning.

Furthermore, the literature review revealed the challenges of recruiting qualified faculty for Sierra Leone. This is indicative of a downslide of education, high unemployment, and poverty.

As consequences of the war significant for this dissertation is the absence of literature findings because of the challenges being faced by community colleges in Sierra Leone. Findings from this dissertation were intended to close that gap, lead to policies, measures and practices that can more efficiently identify, recruit, develop, and retain qualified faculty for its community colleges.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I offer an overview of the techniques I used to conduct this research study, and discuss the design and justification for selecting this strategy. The chapter also includes discussions of the participants and demographics along with the research setting and context. I also offer a detailed explanation of the research process, and address the ethical and moral concerns related to the study. The approach and instruments used in measuring the results are covered, plus the rationale for the selected statistical method. Rounding out the chapter is a discussion of the validity and reliability of these instruments.

Creswell (2014) suggested that researchers can use multiple approaches for data collection. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods are three strategies of inquiry that researchers use to get a better understanding of social challenges (Creswell, 2014). In addition, there are various research approaches within qualitative methods including:

- Ethnography, which researchers use to study people in their normal setting, and is closely related to anthropology. This approach focuses mainly on capturing a people's culture.
- Phenomenology, which researchers use to focus on people's subjective experiences and interpretations.
- Narrative inquiry is the process of data and information collection via story telling.

- Case study is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in detail a program, activity, process, or individuals. This approach is delimited by time and activity, and researchers collect in depth information using a variety of data collection procedures.
- Grounded theory consists of the simultaneous collection and analysis of data, typically through observations. Researchers then develop a theory from the data collected.

For this study, I selected the case study research design over the other methods. Patton (2014) stated, case studies are useful when one needs to understand some special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth and there is limited information available. According to Yin (2014) the case study design is appropriate if a researcher is trying to explain *how* or *why* a social phenomenon works.

Accordingly, I deemed the case study research method to be the most appropriate methodology for my needs because it offered me a way to explain current practices and discover some of the essential characteristics of how community colleges in Freetown can succeed in faculty attraction, recruitment, and retention.

There is no gainsaying the fact that community colleges are being challenged with recruiting and retaining qualified faculty as consequence of the “brain drain” in Sierra Leone. The education act of 2004 identified these as problems, but no strategic policies were developed to implement as a solution to these challenges. The factors contributing to these challenges include the lack of available prospective faculty with the necessary credentials in training and education. A second factor is the perceptions

qualified potential faculty members have of community colleges as related to comparatively low remuneration and a more lucrative alternate employment (Sierra Leone Gazette, 2004).

This chapter is divided into five parts. Part one includes an overview of the information needed to conduct the data collection. In the second part, I present the research methods used for conducting the study, as well as the sampling process. In the third part, I describe the process used for data collection and analysis for this study. The fourth part includes discussion of a series of theories related to the research design. Highlighted in those discussions are strong points and limitations of those strategies. Finally, I discuss the credibility, validity, and reliability of the study and findings while noting restrictions that resulted from the methodology.

### **Research Design and Approach**

A research design is the methodical plan used to guide a researcher through his or her research study. The research design refers to the entire strategy selected by the researcher to integrate the different components of the study in a logical manner, thereby ensuring that the researcher will successfully address the research problem. It includes the outline for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. According to Creswell (2003), interviews provide the qualitative researcher “measures or observations for testing or building a theory” (p. 15).

First, qualitative research is aimed at generating theories and hypotheses from emerging trends (Crossley & Vulliamy, 2011). When beginning this project, my goal was to conduct an explanatory single case study. There are different types of case



studies, and according to Yin (2014), this approach is typical of research studies where the researcher is looking to find an answer to a question that seeks to explain cause and effect.

An explanatory single case study was appropriate for this research because I intended to investigate how to attract and retain qualified professors, and what necessary credentials would be required of a community college model in Sierra Leone's existing higher education system. Yin further identified structured and unstructured interviews and document analysis as primary data gathering methods in case study research. I interviewed a small number of participants, so mixed-methods or quantitative research methods were not appropriate techniques for gathering data.

In case study research, the research question should allow new and unanticipated ideas to come into view. I constructed the questions in the form of *how* or *why* (see Wahyuni, 2012). The rationale behind this study provided further support for the use of the qualitative methodology with the case study instead of a quantitative research study. In accordance with research tradition, I aimed to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on the potential benefits to Sierra Leone of retaining qualified faculty for its community college system.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the instrument (Patton, 2014), and is therefore responsible for interacting and collaborating with the participants in the data collection process. Qualitative researchers believe researcher participation enriches the study (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). I used face-to-face interviews to collect data for

this study. According to Patton (2014) and Stake (2010), the goal of using a variety of resources for data collection is to develop the theory-generating capabilities of the study, and to present further validity to statements made by the researcher or the participants in the study.

There are also challenges relating to how immersed, subjective, or objective, the researcher is in a research study. To help minimize bias, a researcher has to be strategic in designing the research questions, the sampling approach, and data analysis plan. In an effort to overcome these challenges, I tried to ensure that I selected the right respondents, and that they were willing to be a part of the study. I informed participants that they could separate themselves from the study at any time without penalty or judgement from me. Open-ended questions were asked of participants to allow them and to encourage them to be truthful and not just give speculative responses.

### **Participant Selection Strategy**

As with any human study, I had to adhere to policies and laws surrounding these types of studies. In addition to an approved proposal, I also received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB #07-06-16-0237871) in order to conduct a human study. My sampling strategy was an integral part of the research design. Random sampling is often not a viable method when the cases to select from are small, which is usually the case in a qualitative research study (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

I used purposeful sampling because this approach enabled me to select subjects because of certain characteristics and allowed for saturation, which is the point when data

collection brings in no new additional insights regarding the research questions.

According to Patton (2014), purposeful sampling is a non-random method, with a concentration on specific characteristics of the population of interest, which will best enable the researcher to best answer the research questions. I purposefully selected participants in Sierra Leone who were:

1. Community college faculty and administrators.
2. Teachers college faculty and administrators.
3. Officials at the Ministry of Education.

I used purposeful sampling in this qualitative research study because it allowed me to capture a wide range of viewpoints relating to the study. The factors for selecting these participants for the research were based on their knowledge, experience, and potential feedback based on their firsthand experience.

### **Data Collection**

After obtaining university approval to conduct this study, I then sought approval from Sierra Leone's Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to conduct an onsite study in Freetown. In an introductory email sent to various community colleges, I outlined the study and provided my contact information for potential participants who were interested in being a part of the study. As recommended by Yin (2014), I served as the data collection instrument.

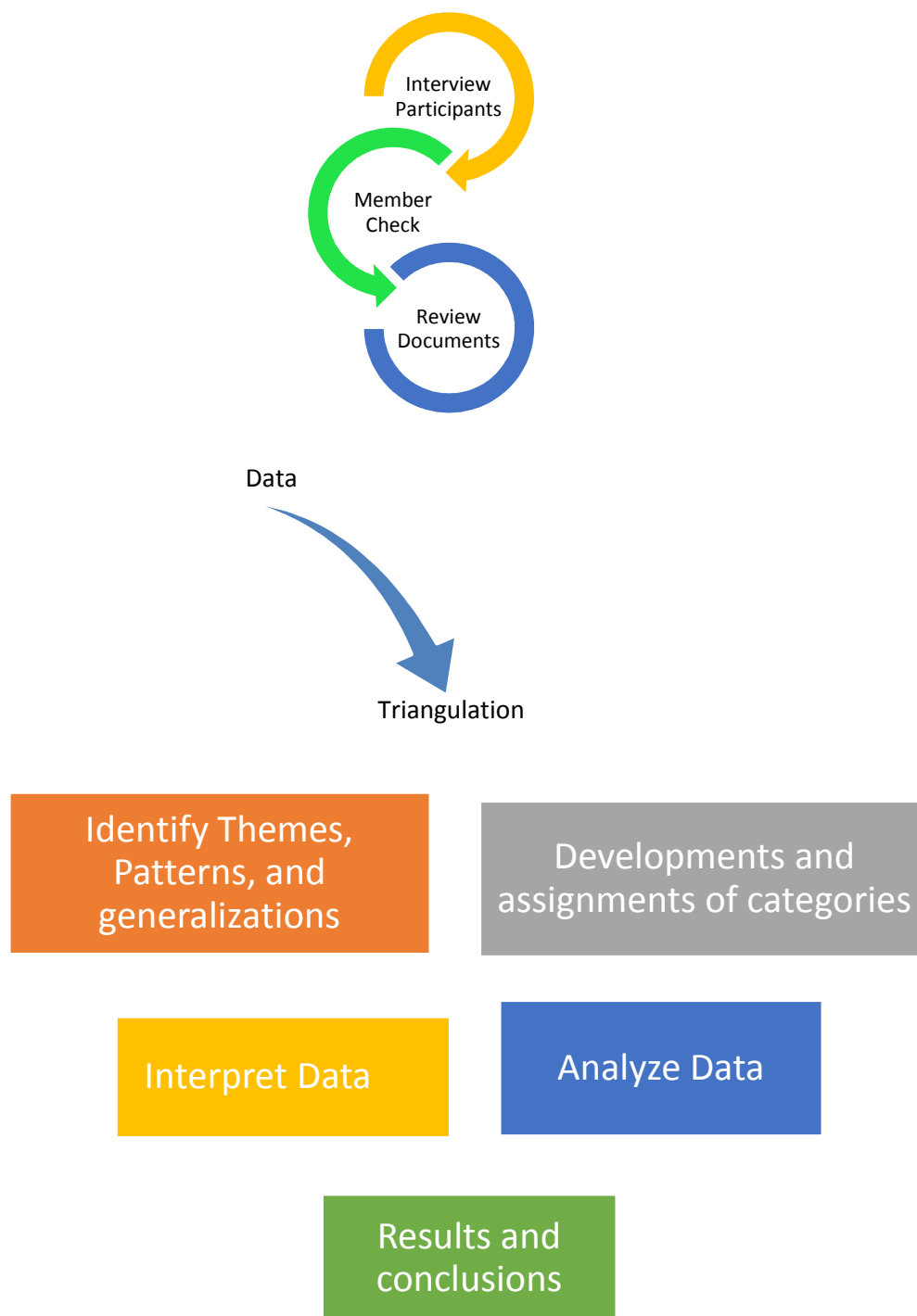
I interviewed three academic chairs and nine faculty members from four community colleges, and also interviewed four senior staff members and researchers at TEC. Unlike in the United States, most of the community colleges in Freetown are

privately owned; of the four community colleges used in this study, one was government funded. Once I completed the interviews, I transcribed and interpreted what the participants shared with me, and met with them again for member validation. At this point, data saturation was achieved. Data saturation is when no new themes emerge, coding is completed, and there is sufficient information to replicate the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

The research setting is the physical, social, and cultural site in which the researcher conducts the study (Given, 2008). I collected data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews in settings of the participants' choosing, which were quiet and free from interruptions. My initial discussions and follow-up session with TEC representatives lasted about 90 minutes each time. The interviews with the community college participants were each approximately 1 hour long.

I scheduled enough time in the interviews to allow for discussions of any concerns or issues prior to the formal interview, and I offered participants refreshments to soften the atmosphere. Each participant signed a consent form that explained (a) the purpose of the qualitative study, (b) that participation was voluntary, (c) the amount of time allotted for the study, (d) that each participant's information was confidential, and finally (e) that there would be no penalty to withdraw from the study. Interviews were slated so they were not disrupt the participants' work schedules.

Unfortunately, the civil war, the subsequent Ebola outbreak, and digital challenges have hindered the availability of documents. Though limited, organization documents were reviewed and they served as the secondary source of data.



*Figure 2.* Flow chart of data collection, analysis and conclusions

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Research data for qualitative methods were gathered primarily in the form of verbal or written language rather than in the form of figures. The quality of data can be impacted by the style and skill in interviewing (Bazeley, 2013). In this type of study interviewing participants, reviewing documents, artifacts and observations were the typical sources for data. The different types of qualitative approaches strived to answer different kinds of research questions and make use of different analytical tools. Consequently, the type of data collected and the method by which it is collected varied in relation to the disciplines and positions regarding the philosophy of science.

Every researcher knows in advance the experiences he or she wants the participants to describe, and questions were designed to solicit answers pertaining to the research study. The in-depth interviews and document review worked best for this study. During the interviews with participants there were instances when I needed to guide the conversation in order to get their complete experiences.

Permission was granted to use a tape recorder. In so doing, data validity and completeness were enhanced through the recorded interviews. Other methods may have been more cost-effective, such as real-time surveys and questionnaires. But regardless of the kinds of data involved, data collection in a qualitative study takes a great deal of time. The researcher needed to record every potentially useful data thoroughly, accurately, and systematically, using field notes, audiotapes, photographs and other suitable methods.

Yin (2014) recommended five analytical techniques as best practices to use for a qualitative case study: (a) pattern matching, (b) explanation building, (c) time-series

analysis, (d) logic models, (e) cross-case synthesis. Pattern logic was used to analyze this qualitative research data. I transcribed my interviews from the audio recordings into Microsoft Word. I then analyzed the data by looking for themes, patterns and meanings of the data extract.

The research questions for the participants were standardized and asked in the same sequence to all the participants. Member checking was used to ensure an accurate meaning of the participants' responses was captured as discussed by Harper and Cole (2012). Member checking is the primary method used in qualitative research studies and serves as a quality control mechanism to increase accuracy, credibility and validity of the recorded interviews (Harper & Cole, 2012). Member checking was conducted after the final interviews and the interpretations were shared for validation from the participants. All of these steps contributed to diminishing bias.

The data collection process adhered to the ethical principles of research in which a file naming system is the most prominent of good data management. Alongside this primary method is printing the file name on the footer of all study documents. The participants were anonymous but the following were included when collecting and saving data: participant ID number, type of data collection method, and location of data collection.

A data-tracking system is a critical factor for data management. It helps to make a project more manageable and outlines steps in the project study including a timeline or time allocation for each step. Examples are issuing and receiving consent forms,

conducting the interview and reviewing the forms for completeness. This study involved international travel and the schedule was as follows:

- Travel to country and locate participants;
- Gain consent and conduct interviews;
- Download and prepare files;
- Transcribe data;
- Code data;
- Conduct quality control;
- Make corrections.

Once this was accomplished, data-management plans included immediate post-collection coding and review of data that were time-or memory-sensitive (e.g., interviews and observations). Research has shown the importance of having a clear file-naming system, developing a data tracking system, establishing document transcription and translation procedures, and instituting a realistic timeline. Problems such as incomplete, missing or unusable data were identified and resolved during the data-collection phase.

Software packages are useful in helping a researcher to create an accurate picture of the data and to also provide an audit of the data analysis process. NVivo is a popular software package and relatively simple to use (Welsh, 2002), which is important. With all the challenges of the research project, a researcher doesn't need the stress of learning a difficult software package. I used NVivo Plus which allowed documents to be imported directly from Microsoft Word and coded the documents easily on the monitor. Furthermore, NVivo Plus enabled me to see at a glance which coding stripes had been



used and whereby having the stripes visible in the documents' margins. Another advantage of NVivo Plus was the ability to store all my data in a single location by unique category headings. Other benefits as discussed by Welsh (2002) were being able to transcribe memos about particular aspects of documents and connect theme to relevant pieces of text in different documents.

I evaluated the outcome of the data analysis based on the Super and Holland career development theories. The conceptual framework was used to interpret the meaning of the data collected in understanding whether community colleges can attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty. Themes which were identified from the literature review emerged throughout the study under the main categories of attract, recruit, and retain. With the use of thematic coding, the researcher chunked or categorized commonalities. Subthemes that emerged included: (a) love of teaching; (b) communication; (c) the need for workshops/ professional development initiatives; (d) mentoring programs; and (e) remuneration and retain.

Themes and categories were used to identify patterns (Thomas, 2006). Research indicates the following methods in discovering themes from research data:

- Word analysis - word repetitions, key terms, and key-words-in contexts;
- Careful reading of larger blocks of texts - compare and contrast, social science queries, and searching for missing information;
- Intentional analysis of linguistic features - metaphors, transitions, connectors;
- Physical handling of texts - unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures.

At this juncture, data that was collected was analyzed so that the researcher could deduce meanings that would assist with the study. Coding is a strategy that a qualitative researcher will apply to determine significant information that can assist in proving (or disproving) a theory or creating a theory. Coding can be a difficult task to undertake as several codes, which consist of themes, topics, ideas, concepts, terms, phrases, or keywords according to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), can be extracted from the data collected.

To that end, thematic analysis captured something important in the research data that was related to the research question and represented a patterned response within the data set. So it was important to address the pattern or what size the theme should have. In fact, Patton (2014) stated that quality is important in qualitative research. Even though there may be some challenges with data reduction in the initial stages, it is imperative to remember that the remaining data reflect the researcher's findings and what was learned. Also, it is imperative that the readers know how the data was analyzed and how the researcher developed his conclusions. Computer software can help identify themes, however, it is important for the researcher to have a sense of what may evolve.

To provide lucidity and easy comprehension, metaphors and analogies are often used in qualitative research studies. One thing Patton (2014) advised was that a researcher be sensitive to his readers when using metaphors and the like so as not to offend any of them.

## **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

As discussed by Ali and Yusof (2012) the goal of researchers is to reduce bias and errors in a research study. The process of interviews followed the steps outlined in Chapter 3 and in accordance with the guidelines provided in the approved Institutional Research Board application. I conducted face-to-face interviews on four different days during a two week period. I interpreted what the participants shared during the interviews and used member checking as validation. Throughout the process, I diligently made sure all the information gathered remained confidential. The audio recordings were that of the participants and remain unbiased; they do not include any of my personal assumptions or beliefs.

### **Dependability**

To construct dependability in my qualitative study I generated methodical details throughout this study about responses from participants' audio recordings and written transcripts. The triangulation model Figure 2 lists the three validation steps: interviews, correlation, and conclusion. Dependability exists when someone else can follow the decisions of the current researcher (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). A total of twelve participants were interviewed and this sample size was deemed sufficient. The participants reviewed the transcripts and verified that the information captured was accurate.

### **Conformability**

The data collected in the research through the interviews were aligned through proto-themes and were further reviewed to ensure accuracy between the links and the findings. Conformability of the results underwent a four step process as recommended by White, Oelke and Friesen (2012):

- Generate an audit trail
- Internal audit
- External audit
- Final report

### **Ethical Procedures**

Research guidelines provide ethical standards for researchers as they pertain to research studies, research subjects, funds, confidentiality, objectivity, integrity, and other aspects that may be compromised.

After recruiting the participants, I provided each with a copy of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, a consent form and confidentiality agreement. These documents covered the purpose of the qualitative study, the research procedures, and participants' right to withdraw at any time during the interview session without penalty; participant privacy and protection of collected data and confidentiality of the results (Gibson, Benson & Brand, 2013).

All interview recordings, transcripts and field notes are stored in a fire-resistant safe in my home. The electronic files are password protected on my personal computer.

All the research data will be stored for the five year mandatory timeline after which they will be properly destroyed.

### **Summary**

This chapter covered and explained the research method, design and rationale for the qualitative research study. I discussed the role of the researcher, the participant selection process, the data collection procedure as well as the data analysis plan. The significance of ethical procedures and standards are also mentioned including: Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, participant consent forms, data collection procedures, storage and disposal. Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability factors relating to trustworthiness are also addressed in this chapter. Chapter 4 will include an analysis and explanation of the data collected through face-to-face interviews. In Chapter 5 I summarize the findings, conclude the study, and offer recommendations.

## Chapter 4: Results

Research has indicated that colleges can be impacted by the outcome of faculty recruitment and retention. These institutions continue to be a resource for producing a skillful and knowledgeable labor force (Figueroa, 2015). The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine whether the policies and strategies in place at community colleges in Sierra Leone would attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty. The participants I selected for this study included three administrators/department chairs and nine faculty members from four community colleges located in the capital city of Freetown.

To maintain confidentiality, I have identified the colleges included in this study as Private A, Private B, Private C, and Public D. Each of these institutions offers a 2-year degree program as well as a variety of certification programs. The tables below show the student and academic staff population and degrees offered, as well as university affiliation.

Table 1

### *Student and Academic Staff Population*

Institution	Classification	Student Population 2012/2013	Academic Staff 2012/2013	Student Population 2013/2014	Academic Staff 2013/2014
A	Private	65	18	110	19
B	Private	675	92	1506	92
C	Private	341	36	438	33
D	Public	4117	274	3282	259

*Note.* Data from Tertiary Education Commission (2015).

Table 2

*Registered Tertiary Education Institutions*

Institution	Programs offered / accredited by TEC
A	Certificates, Diplomas & Higher National Diplomas
B	Certificates, Diplomas & Undergraduate Degrees (Affiliated with Njala University)
C	Certificates, Diplomas & Undergraduate Degrees (Affiliated with the University of Sierra Leone)
D	Certificates, Diplomas & Undergraduate Degrees (Affiliated with Njala University)

*Note.* Data from Tertiary Education Commission (2015).

I used the research data to identify policies and strategies community college chairs could use in the recruitment and retention process, and for faculty career and professional development. This study contributes to the body of research on the roles, responsibilities, and challenges faced by academic chairs and faculty of these institutions. The role of a department chair is critical for higher education institutions. Roach (1976) believed that department chairs make most academic decisions on campuses. Likewise, Carpenter-Hubin and Snover (2013) noted that the academic chair is responsible for creating an environment that promotes retention through professional growth and development of faculty.

In line with this belief, I selected participants who were administrators/department chairs and faculty from both private and public community colleges in Freetown. In this chapter, I have divided the results into two fundamental themes based on responses from (a) administrators/department chairs, and (b) faculty at community colleges in Sierra Leone. Accordingly, I divided the participants who volunteered into two groups

comprised of three administrators/department chairs and nine faculty from four community colleges in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

All participants had an academic background in the Sierra Leone higher education system. I used a case study format, and interviewed all participants one-on-one, guided by a questionnaire I designed (see Appendices A and B). Responses to the questionnaires were recorded, transcribed, and compiled to allow for the use of a statistical analysis program. In this chapter, I focus on the results of the compiled face-to-face interview data. The research questions in this study have been answered from the results gained from the study. In the remainder of this chapter I present my findings based on the collected data.

I asked each administrator/chair participant seven questions (see Appendix A for interview guide). Research Questions 1 and 2 pertained to the policies and strategies used for the attraction, recruitment, and retention of qualified faculty and the apparent effectiveness of these measures. Challenges relating to faculty recruitment within community colleges were discussed in relation to Research Question 3. Respondents addressed faculty retention challenges in their responses to Research Question 4. I derived the themes for the research questions were derived using Microsoft Word and NVivo.



### **Responses from Administrators/Department Chairs**

In participants responses to the question “What policies and strategies do you utilize to recruit qualified faculty?” I noted that, depending on the type of college (public or private), the answers were not one size fits all. There was no standardized or formal recruitment process to attract qualified faculty. Some participants reported that their colleges used direct recruiting methods that included advertising the jobs in newspapers, radio, TV ads, and so on. Other participants reported that their colleges had indirect processes such as internal recruitment. For the latter, candidates are identified among the best students in the college or through head hunting or networking. Participants reported that candidates recruited internally were usually taken through an in-house training or internship to develop their capacity. I also found a significant difference in the colleges’ qualification requirements.

In certain colleges, the candidate only needed a first degree, whereas others needed to have at least a Master’s degree before being considered. Most colleges also required experience in their field of choice, and candidates’ educational backgrounds, commitment, and dedication were also taken into consideration.

Participants reported that candidates looked at the image of the job, and whether the institution was privately or publically subsidized. The perception was that there was a better career path, salary structure and job security in public colleges as opposed to private colleges.

In participants responses to the question “Of the processes identified in Question 1, which three that you use do you believe are the most effective?” Participants from colleges with standard recruitment policies considered their recruitment requirements as most effective, while those using indirect methods believed they gave them the ability to identify and train the candidate of their choice. Some participants indicated that networking was a good strategy.

In participants responses to the question “After a faculty member has been selected and hired, what measures do you implement to retain that faculty member?” Institution A used one of the most important measures which was performance bonding. Other participants indicated that their colleges tried to create a career path for their lecturers. The incentive was to go 50/50 on the funding depending on the type of contract held by the lecturer. In most instances, this incentive it was only available to full time faculty. Certain colleges offered allowances for medical, house rental, travel, child education, cost of living, vacation, professional development, and so on. Some provided appropriate and modern teaching material, while others indicated that granting the lecturers flex time was another good strategy to retain them. Some offered salary advances to pursue Masters Programs.

In participants responses to the question “Of the measures identified in Question 2, which three that you use do you believe are most effective?” The participants’ believed that in many cases it was performance bonding, salary increase, and improvement of conditions.

In participants responses to the question “What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge(s) facing you related to faculty recruitment at?” Participants reported that there was often a disconnect between the candidate’s qualifications and competence. As some participants explained, there is a mismatch in the education system. Some candidates may have the best qualifications on paper, but when it comes to applying their knowledge and competence in classroom performance, the colleges are in for big disappointments.

I found that the candidates’ performance post-recruitment was most often not commensurate with expectations. Some participants reported having had to adopt strategies for assessing the candidates, such as micro-teaching, prior to offering a final contract. Some participants indicated that teaching materials were not sufficient and the low salary structure was a deterrent. Other participants identified that the location of some of these colleges was a critical factor for various reasons:

- There are inadequate travel/commuting allowances.
- Many lecturers arrived late for classes due to distances.
- Some of these colleges did not have enough accommodation for lecturers.

In participants responses to the question “What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge(s) facing you related to faculty retention at?” Participants reported that the challenges faced by most colleges were their inability to improve the working conditions of their staff. I found that compensation was often not tied to performance, and colleges therefore ended up with high talent mobility.

In participants responses to the question “Do you have any suggestions for strategies or policies that will make the attraction, recruitment and retention of qualified

faculty more efficient?” Many participants suggested rebranding of the colleges and improvement of conditions of service would help with faculty recruitment and retention. Salaries must be restructured. Participants also noted a need to (a) adequately equip the faculty with modern instruments such as laptops and LCD overhead projectors, (b) use competitive intelligence, and (c) develop an employee value proposition (EVP). Some participants also indicated that a performance management system was needed for staff review and staff appraisal.

I asked each faculty participant 7 questions (see Appendix B for interview guide). Research Questions 1 and 2 pertained to faculty qualifications and tenure with a community college. Teaching preparedness, as well as related policies and strategies were discussed in participant responses to Research Question 3 and 4. Faculty reasons for teaching at a community college, and professional development and retention challenges were addressed by respondents in Research Questions 5, 6, and 7. I derived themes for the research questions using Microsoft Word and NVivo.

### **Responses from Faculty**

In participants responses to the question “What are your qualifications to teach in a community college?” The participants’ responses showed a disparity between the public and private colleges. The participants from the public institutions indicated the credentials required to teach at a community college were at least one of the following: an undergraduate degree, certificate in field of study, teacher’s certificate, or a master’s degree. On the other hand participants from the private institution stated the minimum qualification to teach at a community college is a master’s degree.

In participants responses to the question “How long have you taught at a community college?” Participants’ responses indicated tenure ranged from 2 to 15 years. In participants responses to the question “Did you feel prepared for the classroom your first term? Why/Why not?” Even though most participants responded that they felt prepared on day one to teach, their responses were not convincing. Some participants indicated that they had had prior experience in teaching in other institutions of lower level. Participants who attended the college itself and were recruited internally also felt prepared to teach on day one. Few participants had established classroom rules.

In participants responses to the question “Can you think of any policies or strategies that could have better prepared you?” Most of the participants indicated that appropriate equipment for their teaching would have helped. Other participants believed that a refresher training program or advance training would be useful. Also some participants thought that some government assistance or subsidies to the private colleges could be meaningful.

In participants responses to the question “Why do you teach at a community college?” There were a diverse numbers of responses from the participants. Participants would select to teach either at a private or public college depending on their aspirations. Some participants opted for private colleges that have no government interference and better salary structure. Other participants preferred public colleges because of job stability, policies for career development. Other responses from participants included: passion for teaching, love of the job,

the desire to help their community to learn more, personal growth, empower students, prepare students for higher national institutions of learning, eager to pass on knowledge and develop middle level manpower.

In participants responses to the question “Are you aware of any policies or strategies for professional or career development?” “If yes what are they? If no what would you recommend?” According to some participants certain colleges did have policies and strategies, but most colleges either did not or those that do have, did not implement them. Among the policies identified by some of the participants some colleges had plans to further train their staff by sending them abroad for short courses or post graduate studies related to their field as well as providing training on how to deliver teaching materials correctly. Other participants stated some colleges had publishing policies which required faculty to publish articles in order to be promoted. Some participants pointed out the need for sponsorships for continuing education/ career development.

In participants responses to the question “Do you have any suggestions for strategies or policies that will make the attraction, recruitment and retention of qualified faculty more efficient?” The top responses from participants were related to salary structure revision, further training and development, capacity building, attractive recruitment package, focused research, promotions, staff time flexibility, faculty engagement in policy development.

There was a need to implement rigorous recruitment interviews. Responses from administrators showed that they used word of mouth the most to

identify, attract and recruit qualified faculty. Advertising in print or radio would be an effective method to recruit but because of the fiscal constraints this approach would be an added expense. The best approach for faculty retention was perceived to be a combination of approaches, mentoring, workshops, conferences and consistent pay increases.

Qualified applicants, program quality, recruitment process and external accrediting requirements, completed the ranked listing of perceived challenges to the faculty recruitment process. Faculty workload, technology impact, faculty development, professional development for senior faculty, faculty evaluations, and motivating faculty complete the ranked listing of perceived challenges to the faculty retention process.

### **Tertiary Education Commission**

The governing body of higher education in Sierra Leone was aware of the much needed research and development at all levels. Funding, staff capacity and other mechanisms need to be in place to improve regional and global collaborations. With a continued increase in student population in almost all higher education institutions country wide there is an immediate need to recruit qualified faculty and improve on the existing infrastructures (TEC, 2015).

Within a 10 year period there had been a significant increase of private tertiary institutions in essence surpassing the number of public ones. Though private they shared some of the same challenges as public colleges. These included shortage of resources and over reliance on part-time academics from public institutions. These challenges have negative implications on both quality and performance (TEC, 2015).

Despite these challenges the contributions of private higher education institutions to the development of higher education in Sierra Leone should not be understated. Statistics show that to some extent private providers have contributed significantly strengthening research and knowledge production and changing the educational landscape (TEC, 2015)

The analysis of data and reporting is complete. The data was coded using three different methods:

- Lettering system was used for institution identification
- Numbering system to identify individual participants
- Theme categorization was used to:
  - a. Identify potential qualified faculty
  - b. Recruit qualified candidates
  - c. Retain qualified faculty.

Subthemes of each of the above were used with thematic coding:

- Satisfaction/ love of teaching
- Communication
- Workshops/professional development initiatives
- Mentorship programs
- Recognize, reward, and retain

The implications for administrators when working with the faculty recruitment and retention process appeared to hinge around identifying most effective policies for same; all the while recognizing that monetary restraints and resources are perceived as

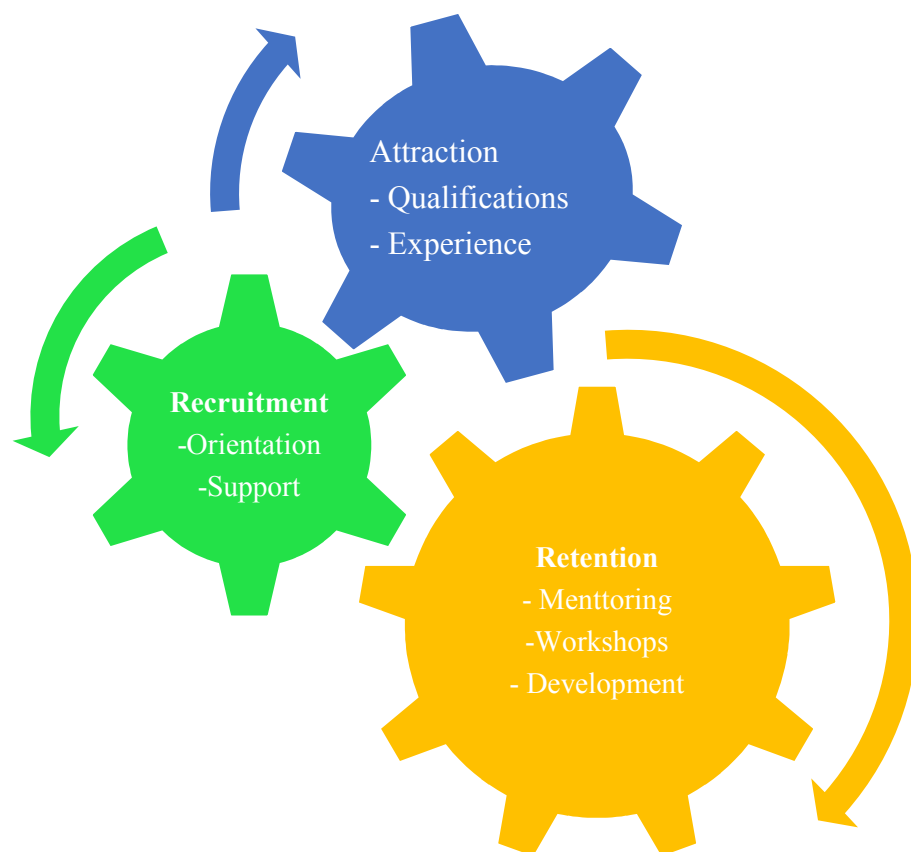


distinct impediments to successful attraction, recruitment and retention. On a positive side, faculty motivation was not perceived to be a problematic component of the processes.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

I conducted a comprehensive literature review focusing on community colleges and their role in higher education. In the literature review, I found that community colleges in developing countries play a significant role in furthering career development by providing the foundation for higher education. Having analyzed and coded the data, it is evident that the insights and views of the department chairs and faculty who participated in the study have yielded findings that point out the benefits for continued growth of community colleges in Sierra Leone. Key findings were related to best practices within the community colleges in Sierra Leone that will serve as models to bring about career and personal growth and development, economic growth, and positive socioeconomic changes. I have no doubt that the best policies and strategies revealed through this research are important to attracting, recruiting, and retaining qualified faculty for community colleges in Sierra Leone (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Research components.*

## **Interpretation of Findings**

### **Attraction**

Some of the community college administrator participants indicated that urban colleges were never at a loss for qualified applicants, and that there was no need to advertise faculty positions because candidates would constantly drop off their resumes or curriculum vitae for consideration. This was not the case for the suburban colleges, identifying qualified candidates who were in close proximity to the college proved challenging. Because community colleges in Sierra Leone often struggle due to a lack of resources, in this study only one of the community colleges was located in the city center.

The other three were in the suburbs. The state-financed community college did provide a travel allowance, but faculty indicated it was not sufficient.

Current policies included using a methodical system to effectively identify a pool of qualified faculty for hire. At all the colleges included in this study the pre-hire screening involves a review of the applicants' credentials and previous experience. The interview provides the applicant an opportunity to showcase his or her individual scholastic philosophy and purpose for wanting to teach. My findings showed the relevance of qualified faculty having real practical experience and being able to bring that to the classroom.

During their interviews, faculty participants provided other reasons for their attraction to teaching at a community college including (a) a love of teaching, (b) a desire to give back to their communities, (c) a flexible schedule, (d) the programs offered, (e) work camaraderie, (f) a wish to share knowledge, and (g) a desire to provide lifelong educational chances to their students. Some of the participants who were professionals stated that their desire to teach was motivated by the possibility teaching offered to share their field expertise.

### **Recruitment**

Sierra Leone community colleges face some challenges in recruiting qualified faculty. Once qualified applicants have been identified, administrators and department chairs can begin to evaluate how the candidate would fit in the community college (Green, 2007). Both administrators and faculty agreed that there is a disconnect in the systematic processes to hire and orient faculty.

Prominently missing are structured orientation sessions where faculty policies and expectations are presented, including personnel guidelines, a handbook and code of conduct policies, information pertaining to the college's resources and administrative support, and syllabus and teaching requirements. A refresher course for first-time faculty— or even returning faculty—was also deemed beneficial. Both groups agreed that this disconnect sometimes deters qualified faculty from completing the hiring process even though recruiting qualified faculty is important. Equally important in securing and retaining faculty is giving them sufficient time to prepare prior to the start of the semester.

### **Retention**

I found that retention policies and strategies were limited at my participants' colleges. The key retention concept that faculty participants reported was that they want to be valued for the vital service they offer the community college, and want to be included as an essential part of their institutions. The faculty members want the administrators and colleges to invest in them. This could be accomplished by providing professional development seminars and workshops, hosting faculty appreciation day, rewarding faculty with financial awards or plaques, and acknowledging milestone years of service.

Just as important, faculty members want to have a voice in their institutions and want to be heard. There are satisfaction variables besides benefits and compensation that, if addressed, could reverse the low retention of qualified faculty. These include a lack of mentors, heavy workload, and limited administrative support. The community college

administrators and department chairs were in agreement that the policies for faculty retention could include some, if not all, of the above items. Realistically, fiscal challenges limit or hinder what the community colleges can do.

As the digital age continues to evolve, it is critical for the community colleges to stay on course and keep abreast of technology. The technology programs at the community colleges in this study were equipped with the necessary technology, but it would be beneficial if the technology infrastructure was found throughout the campus and not just limited to technology programs.

In sum, the following retention policies would be beneficial: faculty development, administrative support, and remuneration for scholarly publications.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In Chapter 1 I described limitations regarding the generalizability of the findings. In the following paragraphs, I further discuss those limitations.

The first limitation was that my study sites were all in or near the capital city of Freetown. Furthermore, I used purposeful sampling of participants from four community colleges out of 40 institutions. My decision to use participants from four colleges was the result of a limited timeframe and budget since international travel was involved with this study. The inclusion of additional colleges may have proven challenging for my first research study.

The second limitation was the lack of reliable secondary data. Available data beyond the interviews was limited to the TEC's recently published its first compendium on tertiary education institutions in Sierra Leone for 2006-2014. It provides a

comprehensive audit of the public higher education institutions. Data on the private institutions was limited.

The third and final limitation hinged on the fact that I had to rely on empirical data beyond the 5-year mark. However, the TEC is fully aware of the importance of availability of reliable scholarly data. This commission is making great strides in establishing a bank of quality data. The first step in establishing this bank of data is encouraging faculty in public colleges to conduct research in order to receive promotions.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study was focused only on community colleges in Sierra Leone's capital city of Freetown. Because of the differences in demographics between the colleges in Freetown and those in the provinces (even though there are about forty colleges throughout Sierra Leone), my findings are specific to the colleges in Freetown. As researchers conduct future research with other community colleges in different geographic locations, their findings will provide fresh understandings of how to attract, recruit, and retain qualified faculty in the country.

Nevertheless, this study can be used as a model for community colleges throughout Sierra Leone that encounter difficulty in staffing classes with qualified faculty. Campus leaders can use it to help to develop faculty recruitment and retention policies that will ultimately impact student learning outcomes.

### **Implications for Social Change**

As noted in the previous chapters, community colleges in Sierra Leone, specifically in Freetown are faced with fiscal challenges and are also suffering from brain

drain. To alleviate this dire problem, expatriates are brought in and are paid high salaries all because of the required skills that are lacking in Sierra Leone.

Therefore, it is the objective of community colleges to educate Sierra Leoneans and enable them to obtain sustainable entry level and middle management positions. In addition, community colleges with qualified faculty can provide individuals with the robust education needed for career advancement which can, not only lead to higher job satisfaction and morale, but enhance the potential to obtain gainful employment and the opportunity to be entrepreneurs. For sure this will stimulate the country's economy and boost its regional posture.

It is important to highlight that recovering from a civil war, and the most recent outbreak of Ebola, as well as fiscal challenges have contributed to the already frayed fabric of community colleges. Thus finding a sufficient number of qualified faculty and retaining them continues to be extremely difficult. Walden University (n.d.) defines social change as a “deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals and communities alike” (para. 2). Taking this into cognizance, I will recommend some policies and strategies for best practices to better attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty for community colleges in Sierra Leone. These strategies are also designed to bring about social change.

### **Recommendations for Policies and Strategies**

The primary goal of this study is to recommend a series of policies and strategies to attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty for community colleges in Sierra Leone. The



following were gathered from the study as recommendations from the department chairs and faculty face-to-face interviews (see Figure 4).



*Figure 4.* Recommendations at a glance.

### **Attraction**

The strategies shared by department chairs and faculty are meant to highlight and shine the importance of serving their communities. Without a doubt, every community needs assessment analysis as the conduit to inform industry needs in the community being served. Advantageous to this is partnering with local universities which will help to attract qualified faculty. Another recommendation would be to advertise open faculty positions and have an open house as a way to ignite interest of the qualified applicants.

### **Recruitment**

As everyone in academia is aware faculty recruitment should not be limited to just recruiting qualified faculty but policies and strategies need to be put in place and

implemented to have continuous professional development for the faculty. The faculty development can be in the form of workshops, seminars, conferences and in house round table discussions. These tools would help faculty keep abreast of industry standards and changes thereby enhancing classroom instructional delivery. Departmental meetings can also add to professional development because they are a good opportunity to share experiences, concerns, and ideas.

### **Retention**

Lastly, strategies were shared by department chairs and faculty regarding community college retention of qualified faculty. It was recommended that there be policies and practices put in place to recognize faculty services. These can be done in a variety of ways such as staff classes based on seniority, hosting faculty appreciation day/dinner/lunch; present awards – certificates, plaques, money. Finally, strive to offer faculty a positive initial experience which will be determinant of retention.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to determine how to effectively attract, recruit and retain qualified faculty for community colleges in Sierra Leone. The career development theories Donald Super (1990) and John Holland (1997) laid the foundation in this study. These theories suggested that faculty may teach as a way to give back to their communities, satisfy a wish to live a rewarding life, and reaching one's full potential and job satisfaction.

The literature offered the many benefits of community colleges. This can only be made possible with the retention of qualified faculty. The research

uncovered several methods on how to attract qualified faculty through credentials, teaching and work experience. Recruiting qualified faculty through effective methods such as networking, community partnerships the web and newspapers (Smith, 2007). Providing career development opportunities, orientations and workshops to help better prepare faculty for the classroom (Green, 2007). Retaining qualified faculty by providing a good experience with benefits such as flexible schedules (Feldman & Turnley, 2001) and the necessary resources needed to do an excellent job (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Gappa, Austin & Trice, 2007).

The interviews introduced other discoveries such as building partnerships with local universities, hosting job fairs or open house to attract potential faculty in the community. Once recruited design a mentoring program and a teaching observation system that provides feedback to faculty.

Community colleges in Sierra Leone provide an affordable way for many to escape poverty and a foundation for their higher education journey. Narrowing such an information gap provides an opportunity for further studies to identify other elements that can positively generate policies for best practices on improving efficacy in attracting, recruiting and retaining qualified faculty in Sierra Leonean community colleges.

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### Appendix A: Questions for Administrators/Academic Chair

What policies and strategies do you utilize to recruit qualified faculty?

Of the processes identified in Question 1, which three that you use do you believe are the most effective?

After a faculty member has been selected and hired, what measures do you implement to retain that faculty member?

Of the measures identified in Question 2, which three that you use do you believe are most effective?

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge(s) facing you related to faculty recruitment at?

What do you perceive to be the greatest challenge(s) facing you related to faculty retention at?

Do you have any suggestions for strategies or policies that will make the attraction, recruitment and retention of qualified faculty more efficient?

## Appendix B: Questions for Faculty

What are your qualifications to teach in a community college?

How long have you taught at a community college?

Did you feel prepared for the classroom your first term?

Why/Why not

Can you think of any policies or strategies that could have better prepared you?

Why do you teach at a community college?

Are you aware of any policies or strategies for professional or career development?

If yes what are they?

If no what would you recommend?

Do you have any suggestions for strategies or policies that will make the attraction, recruitment and retention of qualified faculty more efficient?

# Community Colleges in Sierra Leone Can these institutions Attract, Recruit and Retain Qualified Faculty

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your individual information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or any other identification in the reports of the study. If you choose to participate in this study, please contact me at the number below. Thank you for your consideration.

[illegible]

# Community Colleges in Sierra Leone Can these institutions Attract, Recruit and Retain Qualified Faculty

I am conducting a research study for my Walden University dissertation about policies and strategies for attracting, recruiting and retaining qualified faculty and looking for your input!

(IRB number: #07-06-16-0237871)

[illegible]

## Appendix E: Tertiary Education Commission Approval Letter



8 Jones Street,  
Freetown  
P.O. Box 67, Freetown

(Email – [tertiaryeducationcommission7@gmail.com](mailto:tertiaryeducationcommission7@gmail.com))

28<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Ms. Gloria Betts  
3850 Tremayne Terrace  
Silver Spring  
Maryland  
USA

Dear Madam,

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT DOCTORAL RESEARCH -  
LETTER OF CO-OPERATION**

I write on behalf of the Tertiary Education Commission to acknowledge receipt of your letter on the above subject and to state that its content is well understood.

The TEC was established by an Act of Parliament in 2001 to among other things

- 7 (1) *“.....to advise government on tertiary education and to provide an institutional liaison with government and other stakeholder organizations offering assistance in the tertiary education sector and to ensure parity of the products of tertiary education institution.”*

*Section 7 (2) (k) (l) (m) of the TEC Act 2001 empowers TEC to advise Government on the establishment of new universities, polytechnic or campuses.*

- (l) *“.....advise the government on any reviews or modification of courses or legislation relating to universities, polytechnic and teacher-training colleges;” and*

- (m) *“.....do all such things as will contribute to the attainment of the object stated in subsection (l)*

In the light of the above, I am pleased to inform you that the Commission will be willing to provide you with the necessary assistance required to actualize your research.

Thanks in promoting higher education in Sierra Leone.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. David S.M. Koroma  
Executive Secretary

Appendix E: Map of Sierra Leone

